D 525
.S843
Copy 1

THE NATIONS AT WAR

A SERMON PREACHED IN ST. JAMES'S CHURCH,
CHICAGO, ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 4, 1914,
AT A SERVICE OF INTERCESSION FOR PEACE
HELD IN CONFORMITY WITH THE PROCLAMATION OF
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

BY THE
REV. JAMES S. STONE, D.D.

PRINTED BY REQUEST

Return to
Div. of Bibliography
Lib. of Congress
(Not yet Catalogued)

By transfer
The W. te House
NOV 5 1914

THE NATIONS AT WAR

A SERMON PREACHED IN ST. JAMES'S CHURCH,
CHICAGO, ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 4, 1914,
AT A SERVICE OF INTERCESSION FOR PEACE
HELD IN CONFORMITY WITH THE PROCLAMATION OF
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

BY THE
REV. JAMES S. STONE, D.D.

CHICAGO

I5a5
.S643

With the Compliments of
ROBERT COLLYER FERGUS
1058, The National Life Building
CHICAGO

THE NATIONS AT WAR

Malachi ii. 10: "Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers?"

Five of the great nations of the world are at war. Some of the smaller powers have also joined themselves in battle. Never has the world known a struggle so extensive, so forceful, so sanguinary, so remorseless. The choicest lands of earth have been devastated, cities and villages have been cast down, homes destroyed, hosts of people scattered, the tenderest instincts of humanity outraged, in whirlwinds of passion, furious beyond imagination, fierce as the very fires of hades. Language fails to describe the horrors of Europe at this time; while the effects of so desperate and vast a conflict have disturbed widely and deeply the countries not as yet embroiled. The appalling news from beyond the seas chills and sickens the heart. Abroad the tidings are of death; at home we are perplexed by decreasing business and consequent privations, and distressed by emotions that threaten to deteriorate our judgment and to drive from us serenity of soul and mind.

The greater part of the world, and with few exceptions the whole of the white race, seem to have forgotten the questions of our text: "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers?"

In view of this deplorable condition of affairs, the President of the United States has called upon all God-fearing people, on this day, to repair to their places of worship, and offer up their prayers to Almighty God for pardon and for peace. In his proclamation, the President reminds us that the counsels of statesmen have not been able to save the nations which have taken up arms against one another from the terrible sacrifice involved in the battling of millions of men. Under such circumstances especially, "it is our privilege and duty to seek counsel and succour of Almighty God, humbling ourselves before Him, confessing our weakness and our lack of any wisdom equal to these things"; and the President urges us to beseech our heavenly Father, that "overruling the counsel of men, setting straight the things they cannot govern or alter, taking pity on the nations now in the throes of conflict, in His mercy and goodness showing a way where men can see none, He vouchsafe His children healing peace again, and restore once more that concord among men and nations without which there can be neither happiness nor true friendship nor any wholesome fruit of toil or thought in the world." And the President further admonishes us to pray God that "He forgive us our sins, our ignorance of His holy will, our wilfulness and many errors, and lead us in the paths of obedience to places of vision and to thoughts and counsels that purge and make wise."

Besides issuing this proclamation, the President has both declared the neutrality of the United States, and also urged upon every citizen of the Republic the duty of individual observance of that neutrality. That is to say, not only does he enjoin the people from furthering by act or word the warlike purposes of any belligerent, but he also advises such forbearance in the expression of opinions as shall preserve the harmony of society. In other words,

every citizen, notwithstanding his love for the race whence he sprang, must remember that above all other obligations is that of his own citizenship. Before all things else he is an American citizen, and his first aim must be peace in his own country, and the maintenance of its essential principle, good will towards men of every race or nation.

The wisdom, forbearance, and determination of the President and his advisers in keeping these United States from becoming entangled in the tremendous and deplorable war of the nations, are appreciated by all our citizens. We are thankful that God has given us leaders who have so clearly and heartily expressed the unanimous sentiment of the American people, and are so faithfully waiting for their opportunity of greater usefulness. They deserve our praise; and with that praise our kindliest feeling goes out to the Man whose tenacity of purpose and devotion to duty in his exalted office have withstood the heaviness of deepest sorrow.

At this time, then, we have gathered together, as tens of thousands of other congregations are doing, to offer up our united prayers for peace, and to consider somewhat the difficulties and hopes of the times which have befallen us. And at the outset it may be well to remove from our minds certain misapprehensions which the observance of this day of intercession seems to suggest.

In the first place, let us remember that neutrality and reserve do not mean impartiality or indifference. Such a frame of mind is now impossible. Constituted as our community is of people derived largely from the nations now at war, no thinking man or woman in this country can avoid some sympathy with one side or other in this struggle. Our interest in the combatants, in the development of the war, and in the issues at stake, is necessarily absorbing. We are stirred to the depths of our emotions. We cannot escape

wishing success to the side we have espoused, and defeat to the side we dislike. It is probable that most of us are swayed in our sympathies more by prejudice than by any consideration of the facts. In times such as these passion is apt to leave reason behind; and the conclusions to which passion speeds its way depend more upon our race connection than on any thing else. There is little doubt, for instance, of the attitude of our fellow-citizens of Teutonic origin, or of that of our fellow-citizens of Anglo-Saxon or Celtic or French or Slav origin. We live together, we appreciate each other's friendship, we discern the qualities which bind us in sympathy, oftentimes affectionate and invincible, and we determine to treat our differences of opinion as matters for personal or private indulgence and not for social disintegration; but we cannot help our emotions. Nay, more than this, in this country, together we sorrow that the people of our respective races in the motherlands have drawn the sword against each other; and yet there are people in Chicago to-day praying fervently that the arms of the Kaiser may be successful, and there are people praying no less fervently for the triumph of the Allies. How can it be otherwise? No man of German blood, when he thinks of the land of Luther and Schiller, of the romance of the Rhine, and the glories of Berlin and Cologne, can be indifferent; nor could any man of English descent, when he recalls the splendour of London, the charm of Oxford and Kenilworth, the supremacy of Shakespeare. Neither is willing that the country of his ancestors, each so renowned in history, so resplendent in brightest and happiest associations, should be desecrated or brought low. Therefore, I repeat, we have our prejudices; and it is not to be expected that in our observance of neutrality and courtesy we should let go our affections or our convictions.

But our opinions do not come altogether from prejudice.

We have not been swept along by thoughtless emotion. Every effort has been made by the nations immediately concerned in this war to inform the world of its causes and its purposes. They who desire an intelligent rather than an emotional apprehension of the question have now abundant means at their disposal. They have not been slow in availing themselves of it. The literature is growing fast. Much of it is valuable historically; much of it consists of worthless and irritating vituperation. The latter we shall do well to cast aside, and also to discount the narratives so desperately put together by newspaper correspondents said to be in the midst of hostilities or in the confidence of men who know. The former we should judiciously consider. No one who has examined the government papers sent out from London and Berlin can fail to discover the occasion of the war, or to appreciate the efforts made to avert it. Nor can there be any question as to the judgment of the American people as a whole. That judgment is as unshaken to-day as it was when the war began. No one asks America to express that judgment, though the world knows what it is. All I wish to put straight is this: That it is possible for a man to assent in his heart to the popular opinion, and yet remain neutral and inoffensive towards all parties concerned; and that it is not possible at this time for a man to wrap up his neutrality in apathy. He may guard himself from disturbing the peace of his neighbour,—even though he has no doubt in his mind of what the outcome of the war will be,—but he cannot think of events now going on as he does of wars which happened thousands of years since.

Another point on which we should have some understanding is the very act for which we are gathered at this time, viz., the prayer for peace.

I am second to none in longing for peace. Even should I dissent from the opinion that the method of force is no

solution of any question, yet with all my heart I believe that "peace hath her victories more glorious than war." The most helpful promises in Sacred Scripture are those of peace: God and man at peace with each other. The happiest days for a country are when the swords are beaten into plowshares and the spears into pruning hooks. Blessed, says our Lord, are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God. The very word "peace" awakens within us visions of rarest beauty and unalloyed delight. We think of Nature unfolding her wonders graciously and tenderly for the delectation of man; and of man rejoicing in the goodness of God and in the works of his own hands. We think of homes wherein purity reigns, and childhood sings its joyous songs; of fields in which the husbandman unmolested sows his seed and reaps his harvest; of busy streets and shops where the merchant and the artizan pursue their avocations free from the fear of foe. Then commerce wins its increase, and art and literature create their marvellous devices and twine their charms around the soul of man. Then is life held sacred; ambition becomes pure as the song of birds and simple as the bloom of household flowers; religion inspires virtue, strengthens conscience, and makes sacrifice a joy; and through the breaking clouds or out of the open sky the light of heaven falls upon a world so like the paradise of God, that once more in the cool of the day the Creator walks with man and the trees of the garden breathe forth their hallowed fragrance. How the world has prayed for peace such as this! "O that I had wings like a dove: for then would I flee away and be at rest!"

Rather than this, some of the fairest lands of earth have been drenched with blood; the quiet of hillsides and valleys has been broken by the roar of cannon, the shout of fierce warriors, the cries of the helpless and dying; brooks once bright with summer waters are now red with human blood;

instead of fields of golden grain and orchards and vineyards of autumnal fruit, the farms are trodden down and homesteads have been made heaps of ruin. And there are trenches full of the dead; and graveyards where some broken-hearted mother or aged tottering father has pitifully smoothed the sod neath which lies the torn body of the soldier-boy. The wail of distress is carried far and wide by every wind; the anguish lies on all the lands, silent as death, hopeless as hell.

And what has been gained? Brave little Belgium has been ruined; Paris has trembled at the dread of siege; millions of men have been for three weeks locked in a death-struggle; and Germany has been charged with atrocities enough, if true, to lay her under the scorn of the nations and everlasting shame. Not one principle has been vindicated; not one link loosened of the chain that binds the nations. Beneath the waters, mines and destroyers have done their work; from the clouds have dropped balls of fire and streams of torture. Two months, and Europe has endured more woe and misery than the most fervent poet ever pictured possible in the regions of the lost. Human ingenuity has gone beyond diabolical invention. Ancient and mediaeval warfare knew no such horrors. Men have gone mad,—more furious than demons, more merciless than Satan. If all this be gain: if all this be glory: if all this be the result of forty years' preparation, who can imagine the woe which will befall the nations if the war lasts much longer?

It is when we think of these things that we pray for peace; and I have dwelt upon them, not only to suggest the blessings which peace only can give, but also to make plain that I am for peace, though I am about to say some things that are likely to be misconstrued.

I long for peace; but I do not think that we should wish for peace at any price. Precious as peace may be, there are

some things still more precious. They are so precious, that terrible as war may be they justify war for their possession and security. I need only advert, for instance, to freedom. Had the American colonies not drawn the sword, independence had not been won; had Europe not banded together, Napoleon would have placed upon the nations a yoke of abject thraldom; had Belgium not sought to maintain its self-respect and honour, it had deserved all that has befallen it. The conditions that lead to such conflicts are deplorable, but the determination not to rest under such is one of the most praiseworthy of human virtues. It is not necessary for me to define the aggression in the present war; nor is it necessary for me to argue that defence could scarcely have been neglected. It is not fair, therefore, to say that under no circumstances may war be rightly undertaken. This does not mean that better ways of adjusting differences may not exist, but there do come occasions when these better ways are not evident. Nor does it mean that an offensive war is ever justifiable.

But it does lead us on to maintain that in times of war hasty and unseasonable efforts to secure peace may do more harm than good. They may even prolong and embitter the strife. Lincoln felt this in the day when this nation was confronted by disruption. Peace demands patience, and peace-advocates are oftentimes shortsighted and unreasonable. The attempts made a few weeks since to force the President's hand were mistakes. Instead of helping, they tended to embarrass him. Not only has he no power to interfere, but were he to attempt such he would endanger his own usefulness when the appeal for intervention comes from one or other of the warring nations. So far none of them is talking of peace. As a matter of fact none of them will talk of peace until defeat is in sight. At the present time both sides are bent upon crushing and humiliating

the other side. Neither side is likely to go so far as that, but the defensive side cannot cease till it has secured itself against the offensive side. Whoever started the war will have to be so far disabled that another war will be impossible. A mere truce would be fatal to peace. On the contrary, it would involve another war. We have therefore to watch as well as pray.

Indeed we need to search first for the things which make for peace. It is no use to seek peace where there is no peace; but the nations at war will be in the highway to peace when they discern the true proportions of things, understand each other rightly and justly, and realize that they have all one Father, and that one God created them. So soon as they acknowledge that their own counsel failed them; that they had no power of themselves to put straight their differences; that the faults are not all on one side, or the virtues all on the other side; that race-hatred is the worst and most unintelligent of all hatreds—then peace will appear like the dawn of a clear day. And we shall help them, not only by praying for them, but by praying also that from us may be banished all thoughts of bitterness or revenge, all harsh judgments, all doubts that right will conquer wrong, and the good outrun the evil. In praying and working for these ends, and not by suggestions of untimely interference with the combatants, we may more surely hasten the coming of peace.

It is in this spirit that I urge the prayer for peace. Not for peace before it is time for peace, or necessarily for peace when the nations are so exhausted that they can fight no more, but for peace which shall be permanent, in which the sword shall be broken and the cannon made useless for all time.

Perhaps I may venture to remind you that the dreams of peace which we commonly entertain are not peculiar

to our day and generation. A hundred and fifty years since, and earlier, the world had its projects for universal peace. Rousseau advocated it; thousands of evangelists proclaimed it. In the beginning of the last century, the Emperor Alexander I. founded the Holy Alliance, by which the signatory sovereigns agreed to govern henceforth in accordance with the principles of the Gospel of Christ, to regard each other as brothers, and their subjects as their children. There is scarcely a provision associated with the Hague Conference which was not brought forward at that time. Just one hundred years since, this very month of October, the Congress of Vienna began its memorable efforts to make sure for all time peace between the nations. People then were as earnest as they are now, and dreaded as much as we dread the cruelties of war. They were quite as unselfish as we are, and recognized quite as much as we do the obligations of all men to their fellows. No nobler rule of conduct was ever proposed than that set forth by the Holy Alliance: "The sole principle of force, whether between governments or between their subjects, shall be that of doing each other reciprocal service, and of testifying by unalterable good will the mutual affection with which they ought to be animated, to consider themselves all as members of one and the same Christian nation." But the ideals though immortal came practically to naught, and when covenants and treaties interfered with national policy they were torn to shreds. They were no more substantial or binding than the determinations of the Hague Conference have been. Shreds of paper! Phantasmata fading into the smoke of battle!

This has occasioned much depression, perhaps begotten no little hopelessness. The failure of peace conferences has been regarded as part of the general failure of Christianity. These are Christian nations which are at war,—nations professing not only to be sons of one Father and to

have been created by one God, but to be disciples and brethren of the Lord Jesus Christ. They read the same Bible, maintain the same Creed, teach the same doctrines. They claim to belong, no matter what their difference of sect, to the one Holy Catholic Church. They support large missionary societies, and alike work zealously for the conversion of the world. Each of them has been honoured by saints and martyrs of which the others would have been proud. In every town and village throughout their territories, ministers of religion abide and places of worship are prominent. Religion has been established among them for centuries. And yet, though declaring themselves one in the family of God, these peoples are eagerly bent on defaming and destroying one another. This deplorable spectacle has caused some to wonder if Christianity itself be not at fault. Why pray for peace, if Christianity be not strong enough to maintain peace? "To many," says a message sent forth by the English Society of Friends, "will come the temptation to deny God, and to turn away with despair from the Christianity which seems to be identified with bloodshed on so gigantic a scale."

But the calamity which has befallen the world is the fault neither of peace conferences or of Christianity. It springs out of a humanity which has so far denied itself as to set at naught its own resolutions, and to disregard the principles of the religion it professes. It is the work of a humanity which for the nonce has lost its balance, and indicates no more the failure of peace conferences or of Christianity than prisons and asylums prove the failure of society. At all events the world outside of the regions of war is affected by some spirit which at least coincides with the spirit of Christianity, and which still looks with hope to the restoration of peace and the prevalence of continued and universal peace. Something is moving the world with a

compassion as mighty as the demon of wrath which has driven these nations to war. The nurse and the physician are on the battlefields under the sign of the Red Cross. Ministers of Jesus Christ kneel beside the wounded and the dying. Means are provided with a generosity unprecedented for the comfort and sustenance of the widows and orphans bereft of support. Christianity was not indeed able to restrain the ambitions and suspicions of rulers, but there is no reason for doubt that Christianity will be strong enough to influence the reconstruction of society which will follow this woeful disturbance. Perhaps it will be found that it is not Christianity that is at fault, but our interpretation and practice of it. None of us is free from blame in this respect; and in the provocation of this war Christianity had nothing whatever to do. The world will learn when this tribulation is past that had it obeyed the Gospel of Jesus Christ the war would never have been.

In conclusion I would point out some of the good which may come out of this evil, some of the beneficial results which may ensue from a conflict unhappy beyond measure and begun without reason.

For one thing we may expect that the day of enormous navies and armies will come to an end. "No country," says the Message which I quoted just now, "will be in a position which will compel others to struggle again to achieve the inflated standard of military power existing before the war." None of the nations concerned can hope to recover itself financially for many a long year. Their resources will be needed for the revival of their manufactures and commerce. A vast number of their young and strong men have been killed; the necessities of women and children made helpless must be supplied. Debts have been incurred that will not be paid for generations. Undoubtedly the great nations will recover themselves, perhaps surprisingly fast,

but they will have no money for such extravagances as were provided for the present war. Even should they wish for further vengeance, peace will be protected by their very exhaustion, and it is doubtful if men will again be found willing to fight for offensive and aggressive purposes.

Another result may be the increase of power on the part of the people. No one expects changes in the form of government, but it will be strange if there are not great restrictions set by the people on the powers of government. Some of the nations were forced into war at the will of their rulers: the people themselves had no voice in the question. In days gone by treaties of peace, even the Holy Alliance and the Hague Conference, were made between sovereigns and cabinets; the people had no final authority. There will continue to be kings and presidents, but they will be made by the people and will be controlled by the people. Arbitrary and irresponsible rule is doomed. And though it is not likely that the nations of Europe will unite in a confederation such as prevails on this side of the Atlantic or in the British Empire, yet the ideal of such may modify present conditions in the direction of harmony and goodwill. It matters little what shape the theories of modern government may take, absolutism is near its end and democracy is overspreading the earth.

Still another consequence of the war may be the growth of thrift, the curbing of extravagance, and the more generous distribution of wealth. No one can doubt the evil effects of idleness and ostentation. All classes in the community have lived with a recklessness that could only lead to discontent, arrogance, and injustice. Now we are met by hard times, even in this country. Only the most careful economy will enable us to stem the tide. We shall do it, of course; so will France and Germany and England; but only by the measuring of resources, the consideration of

the needs of every member of society, and the prudent control of the everyday life. As the pressure increases our thoughtfulness will grow. We shall be brought closer together in a quieter, more steady, more brotherly intercourse. Waste will be stayed, and the fruits of toil will be husbanded. And all this will make for purity, happiness, and real and lasting prosperity.

Nor may we question that the sobering influences of the peril which has threatened our civilization will tend to a deepening of the religious consciousness. These are times when thoughtful men review conditions and reflect on errors. More evident than ever grows the fact that man does not live by bread alone. He has failed at a crucial moment. No wisdom, no forbearance, no foresight could avert the wild and unruly torrent of the nations' wrath and jealousy. And men have neglected the exercise of that devotion and discipline which tend both to develop the noblest virtues of man, and also to bring him nearer to his God. It is not a question of the effect of religion upon the Deity, but its effect upon us. Some graces can only grow in a spiritual atmosphere. The habit of prayer and worship reacts on human nature to the quieting of its passions, and the encouragement of that serenity, tenderness and honesty which lift it up into realms of heavenly joy. Many a man who contemplates the present calamity will be led to put his trust in God, and to remember that life has only its beginning in this world.

If these blessings follow the war we may indeed be thankful. It is a frightful price to pay for them, and we cannot help holding that they could have been brought about by better means; but since the nations chose the evil, we can but hope that God will bring good out of it. Possibly when the strife is over, the world may have a sense of security

it could not have so long as its peace was endangered, as it has been these many years past.

But happen what may, our duty is plain. We must hold to our neutrality. We must give our loyal support to its preservation. We may have fairly our own personal ideas and prejudices, and we may satisfy ourselves as to the end of the struggle; but we may not do aught to imperil the good name of our own country.

Thus, too, my brethren, we may pray both for the things which make for peace and for the effects of peace,—not, I say again, for peace with dishonour or for the strengthening of force, but peace which shall ensure for generations the harmony of the nations. We should pray that the sorrows of both friend and foe may be alleviated; that their sick may be healed, and that mercy may await the dying; that we may be enabled to see the noble traits, the real, true character, the manliness of both sides; that they may get to understand each other; that neither shall be so weakened or so successful that their usefulness shall be impaired; and that God will have mercy upon them and upon us, and bring the world safely out of its distress.

For, after all, we are brethren. "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?"

Prayer for Peace

O GOD, who beholdest all things in heaven and in earth, have compassion, we humbly beseech Thee, upon the peoples who have set themselves in strife and struggle one with another. Judge Thou their cause and so dispose the course of events that in the end the right shall be vindicated, and true and lasting peace shall prevail. Assuage the fierceness of their wrath, bring back to their minds those visions of peace and happiness which war has dissipated, make them considerate and forbearing even to those who they fear would violate their honour or endanger their possessions, and give them to realize that life is more precious than death, and that in Thy sight all men are brethren. Give Thy grace to their rulers and leaders that they may find the way out of the difficulties into which they have fallen. To those who have been driven out of life on the fields of battle, be merciful; to the wounded and dying, impart hope; to widows disconsolate and to orphans bereaved, vouchsafe strength and comfort. Relieve the distress of those who through this war are brought to poverty or hunger.

May we who are far removed from the scenes of disturbance be enabled to think justly and kindly, to give help readily and freely if help be called for, and to pray that ere long the world may be restored to that rest from anger and to that confidence in Thee which alone ensure prosperity and contentment. Impart to our President and his advisers such wisdom and discretion as may save these United States from entanglements that may involve the nation in the bitterness and anguish of war. Let Thy fatherly hand be upon us, that, serving Thee with thankful hearts and loving diligence, we may glorify Thee in maintaining peace and righteousness, and our country may continue to be a haven of safety and a land of joy to the oppressed of earth. These gifts and blessings, O God of all power, we beg of Thee in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: SEP 2002
PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 021 547 978 A